

## **IDAHO STATE JOURNAL**

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### **ISU offers online dental hygiene master's program**

POCATELLO - Idaho State University will begin offering the nation's only complete online Master of Science degree program in dental hygiene after recently receiving a \$496,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

ISU is one of only 10 universities nationwide offering a Master of Science Degree in dental hygiene. The closest university in the West with a similar program is the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

ISU dental hygiene professor and grant director Anita Herzog said the new program has already received more than 200 inquiries from interested applicants. The program will accept 10 students when it starts up in late August. The fall application deadline is July 15.

"Ours is the only one that offers its complete curriculum online," Herzog said. "Students don't have to relocate to enroll and complete our graduate coursework."

Students will only have to meet with the instructors in person once during an academic year and will be able to take tests and do assignments online. An Internet "chat room" will also be used to connect students with their instructors and other students. The 36-credit course will take two years for full-time students to complete and requires an advanced clinical and/or community health rotation and a researched-based thesis.

"We're pleased to announce that we have Linda Boyd, a nationally recognized dental-health educator, as full-time director of the new program," Herzog said.

Boyd, who has earned two master's degrees and a Doctor of Education degree in educational leadership, is coming to ISU from Georgia Perimeter College. She previously taught at the University of Oregon dental school. Boyd will be based in Boise and will also help coordinate activities between the new dental hygiene master's program and ISU's new dental-residency program in Boise.

The demand for dental hygienists with master's degrees has grown exponentially as the number of undergraduate dental-hygiene programs has grown from 60 in 1990 to 275 now. There's a tremendous shortage of university professors, who must have a master's degree to teach.

The grant money received this year, as well as a \$400,000 grant received last year to help setup the program, is being used in its entirety for the graduate program.

For more information on the ISU dental hygiene master's program, contact Herzog, (208) 282-2734 or [herzanit@isu.edu](mailto:herzanit@isu.edu).